



City of Somerville

# URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

City Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

## JANUARY 11, 2022, MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS
Sarah Lewis	Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>
Cortney Kirk	Acting Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>
Frank Valdes	Member	<i>Present</i>
Deborah Fennick	Member	<i>Present</i>
Andrew Arbaugh	Member	<i>Present</i>
Tim Talun	Member	<i>Present</i>
Tim Houde	Member	<i>Present</i>

City staff present: Andrew Graminski (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning), Rebecca Cooper (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning), and Wendy Sczechowicz (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm and adjourned at 7:39pm.

### GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes Approval

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Talun, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the meeting minutes from 9 November 2021, 17 November 2021, and 14 December 2021, with edits recommended by Member Talun to the 9 November 2021 minutes.

### PUBLIC MEETING: 96-100 Broadway (P&Z 21-117)

*(continued from 14 December 2021)*

The applicant team walked the Commission through their updates to the landscaping plan including a complete planting area in the rear, two new street trees along Cutter Street, and increased plantings. The team also presented the updated design of façade option 2. The massing of the building has not changed, but the team developed different materials for the façade and explained how they plan to liven up the ground story.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the retail space, the materiality choices, the possibility of using real brick at the base of the building, and how the signage/awning area and the retail area as a whole needs to be developed further. The Commission recommended incorporating punched windows at the storefront, as well as possibly pushing back the bay at the Southeast corner of the building so that it is not in plane with the wood paneling.

Co-Chair Lewis stated that the UDC would like to request that the Planning Board add a condition that the actual materials are reviewed prior to issuing a building permit. Also, the storefront, as shown, is not compliant and will need to be reviewed further.

The Commission recognized that this is unique residential topology that is being proposed. They have concerns around these types of small living spaces and the quality of the units themselves without significant common amenity spaces. They hope that the Planning Board will consider this especially in relation to the City's broader goals.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0), with Member Houde abstaining, that the design guidelines have been met.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0), with Member Houde abstaining, to incorporate additional design guidance described below.

Additional design guidance:

- Separate the façade materials through an offset or a major reveal.
- Articulate the storefront differently than the residential entrance through punched windows, framing, etc.
- Articulation needed at the water table line; how the storefront meets the sloping grade.
- Additional detail needed for the retail canopy.
- Recommend that the Planning Board include a condition that the project come back in front of the UDC for review of materials prior to issuing a building permit

**RESULT:**

**RECOMMENDED**

### **PUBLIC MEETING: 2-4 Alpine (P&Z 21-119)**

The applicant team presented the site context, site plan, parking plan, and the landscape plan which includes a green roof. The team then discussed the massing and three façade design options for the four-story building.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the size of the underground parking area and the need for proper electronic signaling, the location of the long-term and short-term bike storage, the lack of outdoor seating space for the café/restaurant commercial space, the trash/recycling location, and the need for the team to work with the Public Space and Urban Forestry division on the possibility of adding street trees on Alpine Street and/or Cedar Street. They also spoke about the façade design options, with option 2 being the preferred. The Commission liked the calmness, lighter materiality, and the green canopy along the retail base of option 2.

The Commission recommended pushing the building back 10' to allow for outdoor seating on the front and side of the building, as a café/restaurant right on the community path is a perfect opportunity for this amenity. The Commission was also concerned with the overhang above the driveway, as it does not seem sound, and hoped that setting the building back further along the community path would alleviate that issue.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Talun, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0), to recommend façade option 2.

Following a motion by Member Valdes, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0), to continue the design review to a future meeting.

**RESULT:**

**CONTINUED**

*NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. To review a full recording, please contact the Planning, Preservation & Zoning Division at [planning@somervillema.gov](mailto:planning@somervillema.gov).*